

CIACO NID 81

September 17, 1981

POLAND: Confronting Solidarity

The regime's show of resolve yesterday is intended largely to put union militants on the defensive but may only widen the gulf between Solidarity and the government.

In a toughly worded statement, the party Politburo accused the union of creating a program of political opposition that "unilaterally violates" the agreements underpinning Solidarity's legal existence and of making "insane provocations" against Poland's allies. The regime has thereby laid the groundwork for seeking to have Solidarity declared illegal.

The Politburo called on the nation to repudiate "political madmen" and pledged to use "such means as the situation demands" to stem the growing threat. It stopped short, however, of committing itself to specific actions. The statement will probably be accompanied by private regime overtures to Walesa and other moderates to reduce the influence of the militants. This would be difficult to do easily or quickly.

Government censors yesterday refused to allow articles in Solidarity's national paper dealing with the union's support of free union activity elsewhere in the Soviet bloc. The union canceled the edition--the first time this has occurred since the paper began regular publication early this year.

A parliamentary commission, apparently ignoring Solidarity's arguments, endorsed the government draft of a self-management law. Parliament will consider the law later this month; the union has threatened to ignore the law if it is passed without major modifications.

Polish Bishops, meanwhile, criticized mounting tensions and called for a renewal of union-government talks. The statement, quoting from the papal encyclical, called for a large union role in economic affairs but implicitly warned the union against "playing politics."

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Moscow is likely to express quick approval of the Polish Politburo's criticism of Solidarity, which echoes recent Soviet charges. It is also likely to register its support for the Polish regime's apparent readiness to put words into action by challenging Solidarity on sensitive issues such as censorship and self-management. The Soviets will, however, maintain pressure on the Poles to prevent any backsliding. [REDACTED]